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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY USSR (Kolyma and the Northern Sea Route)

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NORTHERN SEA ROUTE ADMINISTRATION

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A. MAGADAN RADIO BROADCASTS

The unique administrative set-up in the Kolyma area is reflected to a considerable degree in broadcasts originating in Magadan regional studios. The DALSTROY (State Administration for Far North Construction Projects), together with its politupravleniya (political departments), is mentioned to an extent which makes evident its virtually complete control not only over actual construction operations, but over every phase of life in the Kolyma Oblast.

Magadan radio announcements for at least a year have contained no references to a radio committee or newsroom such as those known to operate in other regions. In identifying the sender, Magadan's announcers limit themselves to the statement: "Magadan is on the air." A Khabarovsk newscaster, however, reporting in January 1952 on the Gogol commemorative exercises in Magadan, mentioned a "Kolyma Radio Information Committee," which may be assumed to be the organ in charge of regional programming.

Unlike most other Soviet regional transmitters, Magadan carries no regular relays of Moscow broadcasts. Rare exceptions are Red Army Ensemble concerts and dramatic skits from Moscow, although it is possible that these may be broadcast from recordings rather than actually relayed. News items about foreign countries, given little attention by Soviet regional transmitters in general, are only rarely included in Magadan broadcasts and are usually duplicates of items carried as much as a week earlier on programs from Moscow.

Feature and entertainment programs generally originate locally and are as a rule less elaborate than entertainment features broadcast by regional transmitters such as Khabarovsk and Petropavlovsk: musical programs often consist of numbers requested by DALSTROY employees and Stakhanovite workmen in various Kolyma localities who have earned the right to ask for their favorite compositions by setting outstanding production records.

The language used on the Magadan radio is remarkable for its circumlocutions and euphemisms, and the news programs are significant by virtue of the data they omit. Magadan's daily newscast on regional activities is almost invariably devoted to reports on the mining of "metal." The word "gold" is never used. Illustrative of the tight censorship imposed on broadcasting was a November 1951 program describing an efficiently functioning plant as having set an example for all Kolyma workers: the announcer described the plant's equipment, gave the names, patronymics, and surnames of individual workers, and quoted the percentages of their job fulfillment, but omitted the name and location of the plant, the number of men it employed, and the product it manufactured.

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Increased efforts to camouflage the nature of the work carried out under the DALSTROY have been apparent in Magadan broadcasts during recent months. In addition to the taboo on the use of the word "gold," many terms from the standard technical vocabulary of the gold-mining industry which were formerly used in the broadcasts are now being avoided. Such words as "priisk" (placer) and even "shakhta" (mine) have appeared lately with less frequency, the announcers discussing the output--in mysterious percentages--of an unidentified product at an unnamed concern in a locality given a designation such as "the work sector headed by Comrade Petrov." Frequent allusions are made to the mining of "metal," to operations involving an unspecified "product," and to the working of "sub-surface sands." The seasonal working of placers becomes the "washing" or "ore-washing" season, while dredges masquerade as "engines," "engine aggregates," or "washing machines."

There is considerable mention of "voluntary" unpaid Sunday work, and laborers are praised for staying at their Arctic posts until late in October. The status of labor in the area is never clarified.

Besides frequent allusions to "enterprises" and "concerns" engaged in the delivery of "subsurface sands" and to production indices achieved by "washing machine" crews in the various Kolyma subregions, the newscasts contain references to road-building, motor pools, highway trucking services, supply deliveries to distant "concerns," repair shop activities at motor vehicle bases, and to "construction activities," although the type of construction is never made explicit. Fairly frequent allusions are made to socialist competition among workmen of Magadan plants and to the efficient functioning of a Kolyma "power combine."

Magadan is depicted in the broadcasts as a fairly large town with hundreds of professional people and a large labor force, houses of two and three stories, a number of schools and at least one technical college, a city library which arranges periodic exhibitions, a number of theaters, a lecturers' bureau under the All-Union Society for the Propagation of Political and Scientific Knowledge, stores, a State savings bank or banks, teams of sportsmen, and at least some manufacturing and repair facilities.

Repeated mention is made of a local State publishing house, the Sovetskaya Kolyma, whose main function appears to be the reprinting of selected books in installments having a newspaper format and easily transportable to distant settlements and mines. It also apparently publishes election literature and official forms for a large section of the Soviet northeast and sub-Arctic and Arctic regions.

B. THE RADIO BULLETIN OF THE NORTHERN SEA ROUTE ADMINISTRATION

The unusual administrative set-up of the GLAVSEVMORPUT (Chief Administration of the Northern Sea Route) is similarly reflected in three daily hour-long transmissions in Russian Morse from Moscow prepared by the Political Department of the GLAVSEVMORPUT. This "newspaper of the air" generally combines the features of an ordinary Soviet newspaper and those of a radio newscast and frequently includes material of an administrative and Party propaganda character. Each issue is signed by "Responsible Editor" Galkin. In addition to reprints of PRAVDA editorials, usually those appealing to Soviet workers to step up production activities, the transmissions include monthly instructions from Moscow to the regional political departments and sectors of the GLAVSEVMORPUT listing propaganda topics to be stressed by agitators and lecturers together with references to background material for use in discussing each topic.

Stories chronicling the "voluntary" activities of settlers in the Soviet Arctic and sub-Arctic regions of the northwest frequently replace the Moscow originations on these transmissions. Although couched in veiled language, these accounts give the impression of fairly extensive activity in the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions among large groups of settlers and working crews.

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All information on the location of new settlements is withheld and industrial data is scant, given mostly in percentages. Few place names are mentioned and no population figures appear. Geographical locations referred to in accounts of achievements of the "Polar" settlers are characteristically identified in a manner such as "the place where Comrade Stepanov is Party Secretary."

Providing some indication of working conditions in the area, a GLAVSEVMORPUT radio bulletin on 11 November 1951 described a "very lively debate" among the seamen on a ship following a briefing during a political discussion on "the work method of the leading crews of the Ministry of the Maritime Fleet, which are now working in conformity with the hour-based production schedule." The ship involved was described in customary fashion as "the ship commanded by Comrade Nazarev and of which Comrade Kuznetsov is the Executive Officer for Political Supervision."

One group of seamen, according to this account, contended that under Arctic conditions it was impossible to conduct work in accordance with hour-by-hour schedules, under which workers would have to account for everything done during each hour of the working period. Another group, whose strength was not identified, "insisted" that the method was feasible, particularly in ports during loading and unloading operations and on board ships navigating in ice-free waters. The radio bulletin correspondent reported that the shipboard Party organization and the political supervision officer supported the latter view, and that the hour-based method was initiated on the ship and in one of the ports.

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